

DEPWADE
Rural Sanitary Authority,
NORFOLK.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

(JOHN CANDLER)

FOR THE YEAR

1895.

To The Librarian
British Medical Association

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With Mr Anderson's
Compliments

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

HARLESTON,

February 11, 1896.

To the Depwade Rural Sanitary Authority.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have now the honour of forwarding to you my Twenty-second Annual Report on the condition of the Depwade Rural Sanitary District, and on the work done in the year 1895.

Mr. Wm. Smith, Sanitary Inspector, has continued to be an able and active help. He has during the year made 293 journeys, 7584 inspections, given 104 warnings, made 16 reports to the Medical Officer of Health, and 134 to the Sanitary Committee. Of these 134 cases reported to the Sanitary Committee, he was instructed by them to take action in 116. Of the remaining 18, two are standing over for further consideration, 16 have been abated, and, in addition, there are 10 which were left unabated at the end of 1894. *have since been abated*

Work done by
the Sanitary
Inspector.

The Sanitary Inspector informs me that he has in numerous cases pointed out various insanitary conditions to the occupiers and owners of houses, and having found on his next visit that they were abated, he made no report of them, and they are not included in the abated nuisances described above.

Work done by
the Medical
Officer of
Health.

My own work has been, as hitherto, the personal inspection of and inquiry into the existing sanitary condition of the district, and any changes taking place likely to affect the public health.

27 Special
Reports.

I made 27 reports to you, the Sanitary Authority, on matters which I found necessary to bring under your notice, describing the character of the nuisances and advising as to the measures I believed should be adopted to abate them; and in those cases in which you wished action to be taken, you directed that my suggestions should be carried out. In many cases where nuisances have been pointed out to me, or where I have observed them while inquiring into the cause of existing illness, I have, by personal suggestion and correspondence, obtained their abatement without making a special report; in these cases my suggestions have been courteously received, and generally carried out with a feeling of satisfaction that the nuisances would be abated without being reported to the Sanitary Committee.

Introductory
Remarks.

Although there is good evidence that progress is being made, and that the sanitary condition of the district is steadily improving, yet I sometimes find alarmingly serious insanitary conditions that have been overlooked by the occupier, or that he has been unwilling to complain of, and which I have discovered while searching for the cause of some existing illness. Many people prefer waiting for the Inspector himself to discover and make complaint; there are also many who, from ignorance or carelessness, are totally indifferent. It requires, therefore, as much activity and watchfulness as ever on the part of the Sanitary Inspector to maintain, and especially to improve, the sanitary condition of the district.

I will describe my personal work in the same order as Water Supply.
usual—Water Supply, Drainage, Water-closet and Privy
Accommodation, Dilapidated Houses, Overcrowding, and
Infectious Diseases.

Eight new wells were sunk in 1895, one of which is 8 New Wells.
on the farm in the parish of Tibenham, occupied by
Mr. Turner, where a case of Typhoid Fever had occurred
in 1894, followed some months afterwards by cases of
Diphtheria. Of the other seven, some were sunk to
supply new houses, which fortunately cannot now be
occupied until a water supply has been given; and the
remainder were sunk because water was absent, and
a supply could be enforced. Seven wells were also
repaired, and the water was afterwards fit to drink.

A double cottage by Denton Wash, which I reported
in 1894 as having no water supply fit to drink, is still
without, although a supply could be obtained at a slight
cost. The Rookery Farm in Pulham Mary, reported in
1893 and 1894 as having no water fit to drink, is still
without. The rather large premises in Starston, occu-
pied by Mr. Samson, a builder, which I reported in
August as having no water supply, is at present without,
although Mr. Samson would be satisfied with a proper
soft-water tank. The parishes of Denton and Alburgh
are still badly supplied, in consequence of the difficulty
and cost of procuring it.

On the 21st of last December I reported a row of
cottages, among many other defects, to be without a
supply of water fit to drink. There is a shallow well
and pump, the latter dilapidated. The well is supplied
from a distant pond by drainage filtration, but whether
charcoal is used or not I cannot say; but if so, it is use-
less, as one of the tenants, who has lived there sixteen

years, informs me that the present condition has existed all that time; and charcoal filtration must be frequently renewed to be of any use. These cottages are in Starston, and I believe the nuisances will soon be abated. The owner seems to have been unaware of their existence up to the time of my report.

As every Medical Officer of Health has to send one copy of his Annual Report to the Local Government Board, and one to the County Council, as well as to the District Council, I sincerely trust that we shall soon have legislation that will compel the supply of one, two, or more wells in each parish, according to its requirements. I wish every Medical Officer of Health would urge its necessity.

Drainage :
4 cases left in
1894—since
abated.
28 cases in
1895 abated ;
1 not satis-
factorily
abated.

In the matter of drainage, four cases left standing over in 1894 have since been abated. Twenty-eight new cases were inquired into and abated in 1895. Of the most important of these, one was at Scole, in April; one in Harleston, in May; one at the Grange Farm in Redenhall, in June; one in Wortwell, in September; one in Starston, in December, which is now being attended to. In addition, I made full inquiry into bad drainage much complained of in Brockdish, in June, and after much discussion, I was informed that my suggestions would be carried out. The Inspector has since informed me that this has not been satisfactorily done.

Water-closets
and Privies :
79 abated.

Seventy-nine nuisances under this heading have been abated. Of these, fifteen required my personal inspection and report; the remainder were abated by warnings and suggestions from the Inspector; four or five are still standing over. As regards the cesspools to the privies, they are on the whole more satisfactorily

constructed and repaired; but we do not at present get uniformity in this respect.

Only three nuisances of this kind were complained of, and these were abated. I, however, this day saw two wells, three feet deep, in two adjoining gardens in Wortwell, each a few yards from the house; into these it was the intention of the occupiers to throw their refuse matter. I, of course, at once protested. My only excuse for this gross ignorance of people is that ashpits are not supplied.

Refuse
Disposal :
3 nuisances
abated.

Only three new ashpits have been supplied in the whole district. No new house should be allowed a certificate for habitation until a properly constructed ashpit and privy have been supplied. This rule, I believe, is carried out in the Hoxne Rural District.

Ashpits :
3 new ones.

Only four nuisances of this kind have been found and abated. But where the gardens are small, the proper and safe disposal of slops is a great difficulty; this, of course, applies to cottages where there is no system of drainage.

Disposal of
Slops.

Twelve nuisances of this kind were discovered by the Inspector, and abated before his next visit.

Animals too
near Houses or
Water Supply :
12.

Eight houses so dilapidated as to be unfit for human habitation have been discovered, and the nuisance abated—in almost all by pulling down the houses.

Dilapidated
Houses : 8.

Only four cases of overcrowding have been complained of; three of these have been abated, the fourth is standing over, as the occupiers are about to leave the house. There are very few cottages containing sufficient bedroom space to accommodate the parents and five or six children, so that if the occupiers of an overcrowded cottage are turned out, they can very rarely get a larger house near the man's work, and if they could find the

Overcrowding :
4 cases.

house, they could not pay the rent if increased in proportion. Again, owners of good cottages will rarely let them to large families. In some villages, such as Starston and Thorpe Abbotts, the cottages are most of them good, old ones being pulled down and new ones erected. In parishes where there are no well-to-do or liberal landowners, and cottages are built by the needy, the old ones are mostly left until declared unfit for human habitation. These are the reasons, I believe, why we have so few complaints of overcrowding—much overcrowding really exists. No new cottage should be certified fit for habitation unless there are fireplaces in two of the bedrooms.

General Sick-
ness cases—

Stratton .	58
Forngett .	184
Diss .	31
Harleston .	63
Workhouse	55

391

As regards general sickness, I know only of the pauper cases which are reported by the District Medical Officers to the District Councillors at their fortnightly meetings. These numbered 242 in 1892; 317 in 1893; 376 in 1894; and 391 in 1895;—a steady increase. Their distribution in the sub-districts is shown in the margin. Although the number of cases reported in the Forngett District is usually greater than that of any other, I do not remember its being so much greater ^{as} ~~than~~ it was in 1895, when it was more than the total of all the other districts combined, the workhouse not being included. As this does not correspond with the proportion of infectious diseases notified, nor with the mortality, it seems that there is a difference in the manner of reporting. Some medical officers probably report all the pauper cases they attend, while others report only those who require special relief. Sickness reported in the workhouse is much below the average.

The variation in the number of infectious diseases notified during the six years the Act has been in opera-

tion is shown in the margin. It was less in 1895 than in any previous year. The total number notified was 54. Their distribution in the different sub-districts is shown in the margin, as is also the number of each class of infectious disease. During the first nine months of 1895, only 21 cases had been notified, but early in October an extensive outbreak of Scarlet Fever occurred in the parishes of Scole and Frenze, in the Diss Rural District. I went at once to make personal inquiry. I was informed that there were cases of Measles in the parish of Scole; but as I could find none, I concluded that mild cases of Scarlet Fever had been mistaken for Measles by the parents, and that as no medical attendance was asked for, and no precautions taken, the children attended school in an infectious state. The children of both parishes attend the same school. In my experience I have traced several suddenly extensive outbreaks of Scarlet Fever to this cause. For this reason I advised the Sanitary Authority some years ago to instruct masters and mistresses of schools not to readmit children who had been absent from school even for a few days, without a medical certificate, or other satisfactory proof that the absence was not from infectious illness; and printed instructions to this effect were sent to all the schools. On my visit to Scole I at once advised the closure of the parish school. This was done, and the schoolrooms and buildings were disinfected, and each house in which Scarlet Fever had occurred was disinfected as soon as the medical attendants of the families considered the patients free from infection. In spite of this, two fresh cases occurred in Scole on the 5th of December, and one later on in the same house. On personal inquiry, I found this was the

Number of
Infectious
Diseases
notified in

1890 ...	122
1891 ...	87
1892 ...	108
1893 ...	98
1894 ...	86
1895 ...	54

Distribution in
Sub-districts—

Stratton .	6
Forngett .	10
Diss .	20
Harleston .	18
	—
	54

Scarlet Fever .	27
Diphtheria .	7
Typhoid .	5
Puerperal .	1
Erysipelas .	14
	—
	54

Scarlet Fever:
27 cases—

Stratton .	2
Forngett .	5
Diss .	19
Harleston .	1
	—
	27

house in which a case of Scarlet Fever was said to occur at the first of the outbreak; but no case was notified to me until the 5th of December. Probably the first case was really Scarlet Fever, and, not having been notified, and no precautions taken, gave rise to the second outbreak. No further cases have yet occurred, February 11, 1896. One case occurred in Harleston in January, origin not known; and one in Tasburgh, imported from Holt. In August, one in Long Stratton, imported from Attleborough; one in Burston, supposed to be imported from Great Yarmouth. Proper precautions were taken, and in none of these cases did infection spread. The cases on the whole were of a mild type, and not one was fatal. The origin of the cases in Scole could not be traced.

Diphtheria :
7 cases—

Forncett .	1
Diss . .	1
Harleston .	5
	—
	7

Of Diphtheria, the distribution of the seven cases in the different sub-districts is shown in the margin. As regards the cause of Diphtheria, insanitary conditions, next to infection, used to be considered the cause; after a time, the preponderance of opinion was against this view, but it is certainly coming round to the older idea, and this corresponds with my personal experience. I have always said that when inquiring into the cause of Scarlet Fever I looked for infection, but in a case of Diphtheria my first inquiry was always directed to the sanitary condition.

Action to be
taken.

First and foremost, isolate the patient, and use disinfectants freely, but at the same time search for insanitary conditions, and remove any that are found as quickly as possible. Of the seven cases which occurred in 1895, in *two* no insanitary conditions could be found, in *one* a blocked drain with defective trapping just outside the door of the house was very

offensive. In *one* defective drainage and offensive cess-pools were near the house. In *one*, and this the last and only fatal case, a delicate child, four years of age, came from London to Harleston. The house the child came to had no insanitary conditions connected with it, but I have since learned that the drains connected with the house in London from which the child came had been tested and found to be so defective that the family will not return to the house again. In all those cases in which insanitary conditions were found they were corrected as soon as possible.

Of the Typhoid Fever cases, four were in the Harleston and one in the Stratton sub-district. The first case occurred in October, at Tasburgh; no insanitary condition could be found, and the patient did well. The next two cases occurred in one family on Harleston Common. Slightly insanitary conditions were found here, and abated; they were not of such a character as would cause the illness. The two patients made a quick recovery. The fourth case occurred in Church Lane, in the parish of Earsham. A man was sent from Great Yarmouth, reported to be ill with Typhoid. The privy here was defective, and the pail system was at once adopted. There were no insanitary conditions that could have an injurious effect on the illness, and the patient quickly recovered, and no other case occurred. Early in December the last case occurred—the father of a large family living on Jay's Green, in the parish of Harleston. Here no insanitary conditions could be discovered, but the case proved quickly fatal; every possible precaution was taken, and the infection did not spread. In Typhoid Fever it is the bowel evacuations which contain the Typhoid Baccilli, or Germs, and the

Typhoid or
Enteric Fever :
5 cases—

Stratton .	1
Harleston .	4
	<hr/> 5

Remarks on
the various
causes of the
spread of
Typhoid
Infection.

greatest possible care should be taken to destroy these at once by the free use of the most powerful disinfectants. On no account should the evacuations be buried until this has been done. If these germs once found their way into drinking water, almost every person who drank the water would fall ill with Typhoid Fever. A sudden fall of rain may wash these evacuations from a privy, or from the soil where they have been placed, into a supply of drinking water, or into water that may be accidentally drunk, and, if they had not been previously perfectly disinfected, a more or less extensive outbreak of Typhoid would result.

Dr. Ernest Hart, Local Government Board Inspector, having inquired into the cause of many outbreaks, has kindly published a full account of these in the *British Medical Journal*, showing the numerous ways in which outbreaks have been caused, the cases varying in number, in different epidemics, from 50 to 300, with a more or less large percentage of fatal cases. I must not here enter into the details of these most important and extremely interesting histories, but I may give one instance as an illustration. Two cases of Typhoid Fever occurred in a cottage near a brook. The ground was frozen hard for several weeks. The evacuations were thrown, some into the privy, and some on to the hard soil, which was soon afterwards covered by a heavy fall of snow. The evacuations were not disinfected, as the illness for the first 10 or 12 days was not known to be Typhoid Fever. The frost broke up suddenly, with a heavy fall of rain; the contents of the privy, as well as the evacuations in the snow, were washed into the brook, which unfortunately supplied two dairy farms. A fortnight after this Typhoid Fever broke out, and

upwards of 50 cases occurred, with a large percentage of deaths. All the cases occurred among those who used this water or the milk of one of the two dairy farms.

Only one case of Puerperal Fever occurred. This was in June, in the parish of Redenhall. Insanitary conditions had nothing to do with it, neither was it caused by infection from a previous case, but from blood-poisoning, or Septicæmia, as the case was notified. The woman was attended by a midwife, who left the placenta, or a portion of it, behind without knowing it; this decomposed, causing fever from blood-poisoning, and although, when medical aid was called in, everything that surgery could do was done, the patient succumbed.

Puerperal
Fever : 1 case
(fatal).
Harleston Sub-
district.

Fourteen cases of Erysipelas were notified to me in 1895—one-third less than in 1894; none proved fatal, nor could any case be traced to insanitary conditions. The objects of notifying Erysipelas I have stated in previous reports. I quite agree with those who believe it is a disease that should be notified.

Erysipelas :
14 cases.
Stratton . 3
Fornsett . 4
Harleston . 7
—
14

Of sickness from infectious diseases not notified I am in the same position as in general sickness. I hear only of the fatal cases from the Registrar's Returns, and of the cases reported to the guardians by the District Medical Officers. From these two sources I gather that Whooping Cough has been much less, and Measles rather more, prevalent, especially in December. Influenza, I thought, was rather less; but 7 deaths have been caused by it in 1895, and only 4 in 1894.

Sickness from
Infectious
Diseases not
notified.

Rushall, from April 22 to May 6, from Influenza. Scole, from October 19 to Christmas holidays—Scarlet Fever. Bunwell, from November 28 to December 20—Measles.

Schools closed.

Mortality from
Infectious
Diseases
notified—

Diphtheria . 1
Typhoid . 1
Puerperal . 1

—
3

0·1 per 1000.

Add to these—

Whooping
Cough . 2
Diarrhœa . 5

—
7

Total, 10
or 0·5 per 1000.

The mortality from the eleven classes of infectious disease which are notified was only 3 in 1895 ; that is, 0·1 per 1000 of the population—a little over half what it was in 1894 ; and in that year it was lower than it had been since the Notification Act came into force.

When I add to these the deaths from Measles, Whooping Cough, and Diarrhœa, including all the infectious diseases, it only brings the total to 10, which is 0·5 per 1000 of the population. This is the lowest total mortality from infectious disease which I have had to record since the Act. In 1894, the total was 30, or 1·5 per 1000 of the population. The proportion of these cases in the different sub-districts is shown in Table A. The measures adopted to prevent the spread of infection I have entered fully into in my report on sickness from infectious disease.

Total mor-
tality, 305.
15·4 per 1000.

In the different
Sub-districts it
was in

Stratton 15·8
Forngett 15·3
Diss . . 12·7
Harleston 13·1

Births, 508.
25·1 per 1000
of the popula-
tion.

In the Sub-
districts—

Stratton 26·5
Forngett 25·2
Diss . . 21·2
Harleston 29·3

Total Infant
mortality—
92·5 per 1000
Births.

The total mortality from all causes at all ages was 305, or 15·4 per 1000 of the population ; it was 15·3 in 1894, 16·6 in 1893, and 17·5 in 1892.

47 infants died under one year of age.

18 persons died aged between 1 year and 5 years.

5 " " " 5 years and 15 years.

12 " " " 15 " 25 "

66 " " " 25 " 65 "

157 " " 65 years and upwards.

Of these last—

90 died between 70 and 80 years of age.

40 " 80 " 90 " "

10 " 90 " 100 " "

Not only was the infant mortality much smaller in 1895 than in the previous year, but the number of persons who lived to the age of 65 and upwards was much greater ; that is, 157 in 1895, against 115 in 1894. The number who lived to advanced age was also greater

in 1895. In 1894, only 58 lived to be over 70, 32 between 80 and 90, and 3 between 90 and 100. The number at these ages in 1895 is shown above.

The number of births in 1895 was 508, or 29 more than in 1894; that is, 25·6 per 1000 of the population, against 24·5 per 1000 in 1894. The proportion in different sub-districts is shown in the margin.

The infant mortality—that is to say, the number of children dying under one year of age—was much less in 1895 than in 1894. In 1894, there were 479 births and 74 infant deaths—1 in 6·5, or 152·4 per 1000 births. In 1895, there were 508 births and 47 infant deaths—1 in 10·8, or 92·5 per 1000 births.

Although this infant mortality is much below the average, I can scarcely help inquiring why one infant should die out of ten born. Of the 47 deaths, I find 26 were from premature birth or malformation, and of the 21 from other causes, 10 were such as might result from bad management and improper feeding, and 11 died from such disease as probably were either caused or rendered fatal by bad management. It would be interesting to know how many of these were nursed by the mother, and how many brought up by hand without their mother's milk. Many mothers who suckle their babies make sad mistakes by additional feeding. They give them solid food, and, because it quiets them, they think it does them good; and this notwithstanding medical advice to the contrary.

Deaths from injury, 8:—

George Bird, aged 68. Killed by the fall of the chapel in which he was preaching; caused by "The Gale."	March 25.
George Everett, 69. Accidentally drowned.	April 15.
George Peck, 4. Found drowned.	June 5.

In the different
Sub-districts—
Stratton 72·9
Fornsett 144·0
Diss . . . 80 0
Harleston 71·4

Remarks on
the causes of
Infant Mor-
tality.

July 19.	Ellen Shepherd, 36. Suicide by hanging—unsound mind.
August 21.	Henry Large, 61. Killed by fall from shaft of waggon, and run over.
Sept. 6.	Fredk. Rogers, 33. Suicide by drowning.
Sept. 6.	Edith Elseygood, 21. Suicide by drowning.
Sept. 18.	Charles Frank Knights, 25. Suicide by drowning—unsound mind.

Natural deaths not certified, 4 :—

Feb. 2.	Henry Howlett, 62. Natural causes—inquest.
Dec. 11.	Kate Maud Tricker, 16. Natural causes—not certified, no inquest.
Jan. 13.	Jack Burrell, 3 months. Convulsions—coroner's letter.
March 9.	Robt. Bellward, 70. Cardiac—inquest.

Cancer	caused the death of 27, or 1·3 per 1000 of the population.
Phthisis	„ „ 23, or 1·1 „ „
Heart Disease	„ 40, or 2·0 „ „

The only outbreak of infectious disease which I thought advisable to report to the Local Government Board was that of Scarlet Fever at Scole, in October.

No action has been taken under “The Sale of Foods and Drugs Act.”

It has not been necessary to take legal proceedings to enforce the abatement of any nuisance.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN CANDLER.